



Academic Plan

2015 - 2020



***nsc*cc**

Message from the Vice President Academic

“This is our moment. NSCC is building a national reputation for leading-edge applied learning, innovative and sustainable solutions, and vanguard curriculum. I am confident this Academic Plan meets the needs of the Province’s current and future workforce and I would like to thank all those who contributed.”

Don Bureaux
President, NSCC

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) is committed to the success and fulfillment of every student – in education, in career and in life. When our students succeed, Nova Scotia succeeds.

This Academic Plan builds on, and supports, the implementation of the goals of NSCC’s Strategic Plan *Now More than Ever*. It charts our academic direction, guides our shared work and compels us to report on our success for the next five years and beyond.

This year the Province released an ambitious report entitled *The 3Rs: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild—Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education*. I look forward to working with our provincial partners to build students’ readiness for transition into post-secondary education and employment.

Now more than ever, we must be innovative and open to change. NSCC has – and will continue to have – a critical role in ensuring Nova Scotia has the workforce required for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

The initiatives within this Academic Plan reflect our commitment to serving the province’s changing labour market needs and, at the same time, address the ongoing transformation of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia.

Keep in mind that the commitments included in this Plan are intended to provide high-level, overarching guidance. Implementation planning, including annual work plans with specific deliverables, measures and metrics will follow. The Academic Plan reflects a college-wide commitment to working collaboratively. When this Plan is complete, our work is just beginning.

It will take all of us working together to achieve success.



Rosalind Penfound

Executive Summary

VISION

Transforming Nova Scotia one learner at a time.

The priority initiatives in this Academic Plan demonstrate NSCC is delivering on its promise to provide relevant and quality programming for communities across Nova Scotia. These initiatives will help the College and the Province seize the opportunities and manage the challenges ahead.

This Plan is about delivering excellence for learners. Building on our foundation rooted in Portfolio Education, Service Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning, NSCC is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive college community. To achieve this commitment, our programs and services aim to raise student success, increase diverse participation, provide quality learning experiences and enhance life-long learning opportunities.

The *Academic Plan 2015-2020* includes ten specific commitments organized under four themes:

1. Innovative Programs
2. Teaching and Learning Excellence
3. Inclusive Pathways and Transitions
4. Student Success

The College is also developing a number of critical strategies that, in concert with the Academic Plan will direct the ways in which we will achieve the Strategic Plan. Work is currently underway to develop a number of plans and strategies.

These include Innovation and Entrepreneurial Spirit, Diversity and Inclusion, Technology, Facilities Master Plan, Alumni Engagement as well a re-imagining exercise in Organizational Learning. All of this work is aligned to support the pillars of the Strategic Plan and will be integrated throughout implementation and annual business planning.

This Plan was developed through consultation with hundreds of stakeholders to help ensure NSCC's programming is current, relevant and best suited to the economy of tomorrow.

Our work is not complete. A full implementation plan will follow. Like NSCC's Strategic Plan, our academic planning is ongoing to ensure we best meet the emerging and changing economic opportunities in the province.

"NSCC's Academic Plan 2015–2020 is critical to all of our daily work at the College. It guides decision-making and priority setting for academic programs, teaching and learning and student success. It articulates how we will maximize and leverage NSCC's pan-provincial assets so that our students can pursue their dreams and reach their full potential."

Rosalind Penfound
Vice President Academic

College Planning

NSSC's planning framework shows how each plan and staff group work together to define strategic actions and ensure operational alignment.

The Academic Plan is embedded and positioned at the core of the College's work to achieve our vision, mission and strategic goals.

The Academic Plan, along with the other College strategies and plans, serves to connect multi-year College-wide priorities. These priorities guide our decision-making and drive annual business planning to ensure we stay focused on serving the constantly evolving needs of NSSC students, the labour market, and the provincial economy.



New Challenges and Opportunities

“We are all witnessing the profound and escalating changes in global economies and societies arising from rapid technological advancements and unprecedented access to information and creation of knowledge.”

Shifting Minds Report C21 Canada

Our province faces a challenging future. We have an aging and shrinking workforce coupled with the need to ready Nova Scotia for economic growth. As a national calibre post-secondary institution, NSCC is well positioned to help the province succeed through this seismic shift.

This Academic Plan outlines our next steps to address Nova Scotia’s most exciting opportunities and challenges. Specific commitments are identified to enhance our program offerings, expand our focus on teaching and learning excellence, adapt to changing student expectations, and optimize student success. The actions which flow from the Plan will ensure we have a diverse workforce with the talent, skills, and core literacies necessary for high-skilled jobs. Our graduates will be prepared to succeed in entry-level positions on projects like the Irving Shipbuilding contract, IBM’s analytics consortium, the Maritime Link subsea transmission project, and Shell’s offshore oil and gas explorations.

NSCC is committed to serving as an educational and entrepreneurial hub in the rural and urban communities served by our campuses and learning centres. We will prepare learners to actively participate in the changing economy through work-ready learning opportunities that equip students with the skills, resilience and practical problem-solving they need to succeed.

Creating a welcoming and inclusive community for our local, domestic and international students is paramount to the success of our learners, communities and our province. NSCC is proud of our access agenda within an applied learning environment. We will continue to focus on inclusion and promote a spirit of optimism and critical thinking in our classrooms, virtual learning environments and campuses.

New Horizons

NSCC will work alongside the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) to put industry at the center of planning programming for trades designated in legislation. We will use Trades Advisory Committees to inform decision making as the NSCC Board and the NSAA Board cooperate to create a new culture of thinking around apprenticeship training.

We will continue to engage with our community partners through Program Advisory Committees and Sector Advisory Councils. Leveraging Applied Research and Customized Learning partnerships, we will identify opportunities for new programming best aligned with the current and future labour market needs of the province.

Along with post-secondary institutions across the globe, NSCC is working to meet the growing demand for online and technology-enhanced educational opportunities. We will ensure the infusion of digital literacies in our programming to prepare students to engage effectively in the world of work and participate in meaningful ways in their communities.

Our programming will remain dynamic and responsive. Additional programming supporting the growth in the Oceans sector is ongoing. We will continue to gather labour market data to forecast opportunities in areas such as Agriculture, Energy, Environment, Health, Advanced Manufacturing, Geographic Sciences, Analytics and Big Data, Business Intelligence, Cyber Security, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, as well as other vital sectors that will help shape Nova Scotia's future.

Now more than ever, NSCC's connection to the labour market is critical to building a workforce that will enrich the economy and grow the future for Nova Scotia.

"In today's world our youth must be positioned for success with advanced competencies and skills to be able to adapt to an ever changing work and social environment."

Shifting Minds Report C21Canada



Delivering Excellence for Learners through:

- Innovative Programs
- Teaching and Learning Excellence
- Inclusive Pathways and Transitions
- Student Success

Innovative Programs

NSCC offers a comprehensive suite of relevant programs that proactively respond to emerging needs of the province. With an eye on future economic trends, NSCC will ensure relevant leading-edge programming is available to meet Nova Scotia's unprecedented opportunities. Building on a history of student success through industry-focused experiential learning, NSCC will ensure programming includes access to cutting-edge technology, equipment, labs, classrooms, shops, and simulators. As a key contributor to the changing workforce in the province, NSCC will build programming to support life-long learning, spanning a continuum from readiness to entry-level to advanced and specialized needs.



1 Enhance Program Quality

- Enhance systems and supports for quality assurance and programming development
- Implement a new credentials framework to support credential recognition and student mobility post-graduation
- Improve program review and renewal processes
- Review and build program curriculum through a diversity/equity lens

2 Broaden the Reach of Access Programming

- Build flexible programming in collaboration with under-served Nova Scotian communities
- Enhance our system of recognizing prior learning to enable a variety of program entrance points
- Explore the concepts of a foundation/developmental studies program and pre-employment programming
- Build on successful transitional programming to expand options for the 27% of Nova Scotians not connected to the workforce
- Develop and promote financial supports to help students access innovative programming

3 Ensure Relevant Programming and Delivery Modes

- Collaborate with industry leaders and employers to develop and deliver new and innovative programming meeting the needs of the labour market
- Explore opportunities to work with diverse communities to identify opportunities and develop programming to meet unique learning needs
- Embed appropriate digital literacies throughout curricula
- Align program opportunities with international experiences for staff and students to increase cultural competence and enhance global knowledge and awareness
- Expand program delivery by maximizing technology and fully utilizing the calendar year in the most effective way to meet student, industry and government expectations



Teaching and Learning Excellence

High-quality curriculum, developed within an environment of continuous improvement, is foundational to NSCC's success. We will examine new ways in which we can be accountable for the quality of our programs. A significant contributor to quality stems from having diverse employee representation as well as a standard of cultural competence across the organization. NSCC commits to ensuring that teaching and learning excellence is developed embracing the actions and measures within the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.



④ Define and Support Excellence in Teaching and Learning

- Identify and share our successful practices in teaching and learning to create guidelines defining excellence
- Establish expectations and supports to strengthen excellence in teaching and learning
- Review all curriculum documents against our standards of excellence
- Establish communities of practice on teaching and learning
- Create a shared resource bank for teaching and learning
- Develop and deliver a full range of professional development programs including: cultural competence, social equity, teaching with technology, mental health, safety, and learning-centered education to support our employees
- Engage industry to facilitate ways in which faculty can maintain occupational currency

“If we believe in ourselves, in the quality of teachers and most importantly in the potential of our sons and daughters, we will have the courage to set a high bar and hold ourselves accountable for reaching our goals.”

oneNS Report



Inclusive Pathways and Transitions

NSCC will respond to the needs of Nova Scotia's diverse learners by examining barriers to success. We will continue to enhance access and flexible learning opportunities to meet the needs of students and stakeholders. Collaboration with employers and post-secondary institutions will assist with the development of new pathway options. This is key to the Province and NSCC's ability to enhance skills development to support a viable economic future for Nova Scotia.



5 Enhance Life-long Learning Pathways

- Improve access to resources to help students increase career choice and readiness awareness for their program of choice
- Review continuing education and part-time studies to create a focused suite of programming that increases entry, exit, specialization, and post-credential opportunities
- Collaborate with alumni relations to understand the on-going needs of our alumni and develop programming to meet these needs

6 Increase and Expand Partnerships

- Develop collaborative programs and increase the number of articulation agreements with other post-secondary institutions
- Work with provincial post-secondary institutions to enhance supports and programs for international and new immigrant students
- Work with Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency to create a more industry-connected applied approach to apprenticeship training

7 Support Transitions to the Workforce

- Ensure the student experience includes soft and technical skill readiness for entry into the workforce
- Leverage applied research opportunities to connect students with industry/employer partners
- Develop college-wide policies and systems to support and increase co-operative and work experience opportunities
- Increase applied learning opportunities to enhance the experience of our students
- Support students with a focus on entrepreneurial aspirations post-graduation
- Enhance cross-curricula and cross-program collaboration exposing students and staff to modern industry-related learning situations that will prepare graduates for an increasingly complex labour market



Student Success

It is imperative for the province's future that we maintain the highest standard of graduate quality while increasing our retention and graduation rates. NSCC's unique learning experience is the core of our Strategic Plan and our Academic Plan. We have strong history of working with students and partners to overcome barriers. The quality and depth of supportive relationships between students and educators are the keys to raising academic performance and consequently student graduation rates. Exceptional experiences are personalized to meet each individual's learning needs and are rooted in our focus on an inclusive and respectful learning community. We will increase student success through a focus on retention.



8

Improve on Student Success

- Increase graduation rates through proactive, comprehensive and integrated retention initiatives and supports
 - Establish annual retention and graduation targets and enhance our reporting and planning systems to measure and inform our progress
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9

Implement an Advising Program

- Put an advisory program in place to support students' development while attending NSCC
 - Develop a framework and standards for support, advisement and orientation of students
 - Provide all confirmed applicants with pre-entry advising, self-evaluation for fit and readiness, and an advisor
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10

Enhance Professional Development for Employees

- Develop toolkits and deliver training workshops in areas such as client service, managing difficult conversations, leading with confidence, conflict resolution, diversity, cultural competence, unconscious bias, and retention
- Develop and deliver training on academic and student advising

“NSCC is committed to providing an exceptional learning experience to every NSCC learner, in all the programs and services we provide.”

Now More Than Ever

Moving Forward

The commitments and associated actions identified in this Plan are intended to provide high-level, overarching guidance. Our next steps include prioritization, annual work plans with specific deliverables, measures and metrics.

The Academic Plan reflects a College-wide commitment to working collaboratively. Success will be achieved by planning and working together across the various functional areas of the college. Ultimate success will be measured as we incrementally achieve our mission:

“Building Nova Scotia’s economy and quality of life through education and innovation”.



How will I help

How will I help

Innovative Programs

①

Enhance Program Quality

②

Broaden the Reach of Access Programming

③

Ensure Relevant Programming
and Delivery Modes

Academic Plan

④

Define and Support Excellence
in Teaching and Learning

⑤

Enhance Life-long
Learning Pathways

⑥

Increase and Expand Partnerships

⑦

Support Transitions to the Workforce

Inclusive Pathways and Transitions

Student Success

⑧

Improve on Student Success

⑨

Implement an Advising Program

⑩

Enhance Professional
Development for Employees

Teaching and Learning
Excellence

